

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINS™

**We Salute
Dads &
Twins!**

www.TwinsMagazine.com

**Toddler Twins &
Tantrums**



Sleep Solutions

**Turning
Night Owls
into Early
Birds**

Road Trip:

**Tips for Hitting the Road
with Twins!**

May/June 2013

**Germ Proof
Travel with Twins**

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Congratulations to our "Fathers & Twins" photo winners Daddy, Paul Szeliga with 22-month old fraternal twin boys Joey & Brett bonding at the beach! These guys are from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and mom, Jen couldn't be more proud!

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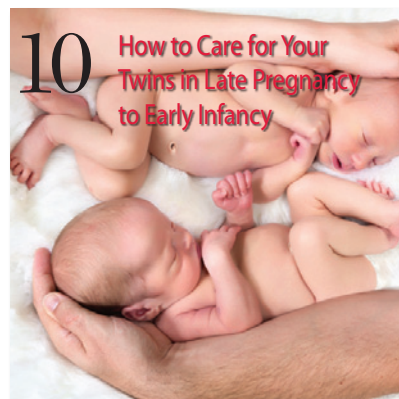
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A FATHER OF TWINS IS TWICE THE MAN...

I remember the very first time I saw that saying on a t-shirt when my twin boys were just babies. I thought it was “cute” and even “funny” but at that time—the early phase of raising twins—I really didn’t know how true that saying actually was. Now after 15 ½ years of raising twin boys (*plus two singletons*) I can honestly say that this is in my case 100% true.

My husband Aaron and I had lived together for four years before we got married! Living in the picturesque city of Santa Barbara, California also meant the cost of living was extremely high and it was so expensive to live there. It only made sense we would “share” the rent, utilities and groceries and we were very happy to split everything down the middle 50-50. This worked well for us and we were a true team. We liked that things were typically fair and even *most* of the time.

For us, we found out early we were expecting twins. It was at 7-weeks gestation when we learned that I was carrying two! Of course all the typical emotions you feel when you hear this news came pouring in and as first time parents we really had no idea what raising a baby, let alone TWO babies would mean for our lives and relationship. I always tell people, “Being first-time parents raising twins meant ignorance was bliss for us...we didn’t know any differently!” which was a good thing for us and our “team”.

We quickly learned that our 50-50 partnership worked well for having twins. We shared in the duties and responsibilities of caring for them (*he let me do the breastfeeding, though!*) I would hold a baby...he would hold a baby... and we took turns on diaper changes; feedings and anything else that was needed to care for our beautiful baby boys. I would always tell him, “Men who change diapers change the world, honey!” and he would give me that look, roll his eyes and head toward the changing table like a real trooper. I can remember many times he would play his guitar and sing to our young babies while they danced along in their crib and the delight on their faces whenever their daddy would play music.

Throughout their lives, Aaron has continued to be that “team player” jumping in when needed. At first it was caring for babies and that quickly grew into teaching them how to ride their bikes, how to throw a ball, how to

play music and of course along with myself being the taxi driver, shuttling them around to their separate sports and activities. Our team uses the “divide and conquer” strategy and although it is hectic keeping up with our busy schedule he keeps plugging away. It was a tough adjustment for him, too, since he was an only child raised by an only-child but he adapted to his environment—loud, hectic and crazy—and has always been there for all four of our boys. We are very lucky to have him in our lives and truly appreciate his love and commitment to his family.

So in this issue and in honor of Father’s Day, we would like to salute ALL the dads out there that pull “double-duty” and who are involved and engaged with their kids. We salute those dads that step up to take on the important task and responsibility of raising responsible, loving and kind children in today’s world. We know you may not get much props but after receiving such an overwhelming response from all over the world to our call for “Double Takes” photos with dads and twins we are amazed and encouraged that there are thousands of dads out there more than ready, willing and able to do the very best job they can! So be sure to check out our popular “Double Takes” section inside at our special salute to dads & twins!

Also inside this issue we talk about how to care for your twins in late pregnancy to early infancy, how to turn those “night owls” into early birds, what to do when your toddler twins throw tantrums, ideas and tips for road trips with twins and how to travel germ proof this summer. We also introduce you to the “Ice Twins” an amazing set of ice dancing twins with their eyes on Olympic gold; we explore the importance of finding each twin’s individuality plus much, much more! If you haven’t heard our big news yet...we have partnered with HP MagCloud—our new print on demand service provider so now you can order a printed copy of TWINS each issue! Read more about it inside... From all the staff here at TWINS Magazine...we hope you all have a fun and safe summer!

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa Reed,
 Editor-in-Chief





Dear Editor,

I read your recent article regarding Twin discrimination with interest. I have never encountered anything but positive (other than the occasional "you have your hands full" comment) regarding my identical twin girls until they attended Kindergarten. They go to a small school with only one Kindergarten so splitting them up was never an option and I am not sure if I would have until I received an email from their teacher. The original intent of the email was not to speak about both the girls but as the email went on it accused the girls of being "a strong force in the room" because two is better than one. Sometimes they can bully a bit to get their way and control the playtime or other activities."

I was shocked and had no idea how to handle this ridicule. My husband and I have always wanted the girls to be close and so how was I now to tell them they should play separately. I could not fully accept that they were both bullies and rightfully so. My one twin is very strong willed and I could certainly see her trying to manipulate the play to have the role she wanted but my other twin is the polar opposite and will do whatever she has to so that she can happily participate. This was an example of the teacher not being able to decipher the two apart and with closer observation we began to see that more often. When I contacted her back there was some serious backpedaling and some definite confusion regarding who exactly was doing what and sometimes it was not even the twins together but involving another student! I certainly do not condone bullying and took that accusation very seriously in both speaking to the teacher and my daughters but I will never apologize for the closeness of the girls. They love and support each other and we would not want it any other way.

I have always loved having twins and have dressed them alike and now after reading your article and the experience I have had



I understand the problems that presents in the girls identity. Next year for school I am taking them shopping and letting them pick out whatever style and color they want!!!

Bobbi
New York
Via email

Hello,

I am a mother of twin girls who are almost two. I am getting worried about their language development. Should I be worried that they are not speaking yet? They can say one or two words or "thank you" but chose not too. Any suggestions are greatly welcomed. I'm just really concerned about their progress.

Brandi Wright
Via Facebook

Dear TWINS:

Here are my guys the day Daddy returned from an 8 month deployment. He's a Navy pilot and spent the last two Halloweens, Birthdays, Thanksgivings, and Christmases



on an aircraft carrier. Even so, he's an amazing father to our twins. He's been home for a month now and the boys are completely in love! Hudson and Noah are two and a half year old identical twins. I'm Collin and my husband is Alex, and we live in Oak Harbor WA.

Thanks for your time!

Hi TWINS:

I'm from Virginia and I have 8 year old twins... I noticed a lot of twins that were born in 2005 (the same year my twins were born) also experienced a really bad storm that spring (2004.) I read some place that weather has something to do with having twins and/or babies. I know this might seem like a weird question but



have you or anyone else out there ever heard of this? I would be curious to find more on this subject...

KrisTine Mittereer-Henry
Via Facebook

Dear Editor:

This is my TTTS survivor and his guardian angel twin brother... We lost Josiah at 24 weeks they were born 4 weeks later my survivor Jeremiah was 11lb 5oz and spent 101 days in Grady Hospital NICU! Just wanted to share my awesome photo of what they'd look like side by side my thing 1 and thing 2 babies :)



Joshua Triplett
Via email

Editor's Note: TTTS (Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome) is a deadly fetal disorder affecting identical twins in utero. For more information about TTTS and to find medical specialists and resources visit www.fetalhope.org

New Brochure Outlines Multiple Birth Prenatal Class from A to Z

If you have thought about setting up Multiple-Birth Prenatal Classes in your community, augmenting the ones you already have, and you have a medical back ground, you will be interested in this essential brochure outlining a Multiple Birth Prenatal class from A to Z.

The content is written by Lynda P. Haddon a Multiple Birth Educator with over 20 years of teaching and promoting multiple-birth prenatal classes in Ottawa, Canada and area. Haddon is a mother of twins and a singleton 22 months apart and over 1,000 families with twins and triplets have benefitted from taking her classes.

Content of the brochure includes: prenatal nutrition needs, preparing the other children for the arrivals, recognizing preterm labor, father/partner's role in the pregnancy and births, what parents can expect in the delivery room, unexpected outcomes, breastfeeding/feeding information and challenges, getting them on the same schedule, working with sleep deprivation, prioritizing tasks, keeping a check on the marital relationship, what to expect the first few weeks, and so much more!

Haddon has been recognized locally, nationally and internationally by multiple birth organizations for her work with multiple-birth families and low birth weight prevention. Don't miss out on either creating or augmenting your Multiple-Birth Prenatal Classes with this easy to read and essential program outline content. For more information about the brochure and how you can purchase it visit: www.multiplebirthsfamilies.com

You're invited to attend the International Twins Association's Annual Convention in Las Vegas—Labor Day Weekend!

This annual convention is for twins and multiples of all-ages so make your plans and join them this year! The ITA, International Twins Association, was organized by and for twins in 1934. It is a non-profit, family-oriented organization to promote the spiritual, intellectual, and social welfare of twins and multiples throughout the world. We meet every Labor Day weekend in a different city and this year we're in Las Vegas, NV. Come join us for all the different events and activities! Throughout our visit, we'll be

enjoying a Comedy Club, hosting golf & bowling tournaments, touring The Hoover Dam, enjoying the dinner show "Tony & Tina's Wedding", and hosting a "Mardi Gras" evening dinner & dance. Also, don't miss the annual Judging Contest on Sunday! All multiples of all ages are invited and you're welcome to bring your family/friends! Check out the agenda on the ITA website at www.intltwins.org or just stop by the registration desk at The Orleans Hotel for details.

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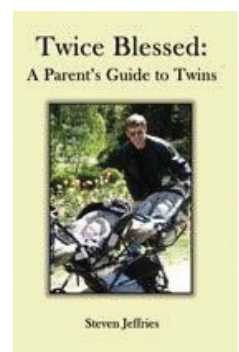
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Popular Writer for TWINS Magazine Releases New Book

If you enjoy the articles inside TWINS Magazine written by popular writer, Steven Jeffries than you will definitely enjoy reading his new book called "Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins" based on some of the articles he has written and available in both paperback and digital formats. The book is now available in a variety of formats electronically and in paperback and ebook formats at http://www.bookstandpublishing.com/book_details/Twice_Blessed.



Understanding Stresses of Infertility, Tennessee Reproductive Medicine Guarantees IVF Treatments!

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.—Tennessee Reproductive Medicine (TRM) partners Dr. Rink Murray and Dr. Jessica Scotchie launched the “IVF Guarantee Program” last week as demonstration of their commitment to “do everything possible to minimize the financial and emotional stress of infertility.” The IVF guarantee program—which offers three fresh in vitro fertilization cycles, plus all frozen embryos until live birth occurs or all embryos have been used—provides patients who do not bring home a baby a 100 percent refund of their money.

Murray and Scotchie, who both completed a fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, opened doors at TRM five years ago with the vow to remain dedicated to treating each patient as unique with individual needs and reservations about their infertility.

For Murray the commitment is intensely personal. “For 10 years, my wife Kristi and I struggled with infertility that led us across more than 600 miles and to three fertility centers with more cycles of IVF than I can recount. There are many sources of stress when dealing with infertility and TRM was built on the belief that Dr. Scotchie and I are partners in our patients’ journey toward fertility.”

In the IVF process—responsible for the creation of more than five million babies worldwide—specialists combine sperm with an egg (oocyte) or eggs in a laboratory dish. A doctor then transfers the resulting embryo(s) to the uterus to develop naturally.



Sheena Rowland, her husband and their twin girls Presley Nichole and Kensley Sophia

“TRM went way above and beyond anything else I experienced, and they changed the way I think about medical care,” says mother of twins Sheena Rowland of Chattanooga, TN. “It really was a lot of work, and there were times when I felt like the most difficult fertility patient in the world. But Dr. Murray and Dr. Scotchie continued to give me the pep talks I needed to keep from going crazy and they are already part of the family. They came to my baby shower. They really have changed our lives in many ways other than children!”

“TRM has comparatively high IVF success rates for our region,” explained Dr. Scotchie who is double board certified in REI and Obstetrics and Gynecology. “Our confidence in TRM’s cutting-edge technology and proven techniques allows us to offer this program that we hope will provide peace of mind and decreased stress during the treatment cycles.” The cost of the IVF guarantee program is \$24,000 or \$25,800 if ICSI is required.

Tennessee Reproductive Medicine (TRM) is a full-service reproductive endocrinology and fertility clinic located in Chattanooga, Tennessee with satellite monitoring centers in Knoxville, Tenn., Cookeville, Tenn. and Rome, Ga. TRM’s goal is to provide the most advanced medical and surgical care to patients suffering from infertility, recurrent pregnancy loss, endometriosis, reproductive endocrine disorders (such as polycystic ovary syndrome and premature ovarian failure), abnormal menses and menopause.

Prevent the Summer “Slide”

With summer fast approaching, the Summer Matters campaign is pleased to provide parents with two resources to help prevent their children from falling prey to “summer learning loss” and support their learning, health and well-being during the all-important summer learning months, both at home and in their local communities:

6 Signs of a Great Summer Learning Program

1. Promotes healthy habits— By providing nutritious food, physical recreation and outdoor activities.
2. Lasts at least one month— Giving youth enough time to benefit from their summer learning experiences.
3. Broadens youth horizons— By exposing them to new adventures, skills and ideas such as a nature walk, new computer program, museum visit or live performance.
4. Includes a wide variety of activities – Such as reading, writing, math, science, arts and public service projects – in ways that are fun and engaging.
5. Helps youth build mastery – By improving at doing something they enjoy and care about, such as creating a neighborhood garden, writing a healthy snacks cookbook or operating a robot.
6. Fosters cooperative learning – By working with their friends on team projects and group activities such as a

neighborhood clean-up, group presentation or canned food drive.

5 Ways to Keep Your Kids Learning All Summer Long

Research shows that summer learning is essential to children’s school success. While children who miss out on summer learning activities risk “summer learning loss” and unhealthy weight gain, children who have access to high quality summer learning opportunities improve their academic and physical health in ways that are vital to their success in school.

Here are five easy, effective and affordable ways to prevent summer learning loss and engage your children in summer learning activities that will help keep them mentally and physically fit, and ready to start the new school year with success.

1. Read to your children, or encourage your children to read, books recommended by their teachers, your local library and online summer reading lists. Sign up for your library’s Summer Reading Program, which offers incentives for summertime reading.
2. Visit free local learning resources in your community that are entertaining, educational and close to home, such as libraries, parks, museums, universities and recreation centers.
3. Play fun math and word games that turn everyday household activities into learning opportunities. For example, have your kids add up prices at the grocery store and challenge them to tally up the final bill. When going on drives, ask them to look for certain shapes, colors, letters or words on billboards and signs.
4. Ask your children’s teachers to recommend engaging, grade-appropriate educational activities that you can easily access online and download for free.
5. Get moving and get healthy. Turn off the TV, computer and video games (or at least put limits on screen time) and keep your kids moving with physical activities that also encourage learning. For example, organize a scavenger hunt that leads them around a local playground, park or museum.

**Source: <http://summermatters2you.net/resources/>

“My Brest Friend” Launches NEW Give-A-Way Educators Program to Multiple Birth Educators Nationwide!

You have already heard about “My Brest Friend”, the very first pillow specifically designed for breastfeeding and the #1 choice of lactation consultants worldwide and you know they are truly dedicated to providing the highest quality and most useful breastfeeding support products for moms and babies all over the world. Their mission is to support moms being able to give their full attention, optimum health and love to their babies and they

strive to be the very best across all aspects of their business. That is why they are so excited to launch a brand new “Give-A-Way Educators program” for Multiple Birth Educators across the US.



Read this special message from founder of “My Brest Friend”

The “My Brest Friend” Twins Plus pillow was designed to fully support mom and her doubly blessed babies. Our twin pillow is very unique given that it has a built in back support for mom, elbow rests and provides back, shoulder and arm support. The Twin pillow has quickly become the favorite among moms with multiples given its patented custom support design. This allows mom to focus all of her attention to feeding her babies and enjoying this special time for bonding. Often moms are busy adjusting and trying to get the right position with their babies and the pillow they use.

My Brest Friend eliminates these issues for mom and therefore healthiest for the babies supporting longer feeding times with a comfortable and properly positioned mom.

We are so excited about the Twins Plus Pillow that we are offering a free give-away to Childbirth, Lactation, and other new parent educators so they can demonstrate the benefits of the Twin pillow while simultaneously teaching about breastfeeding multiples and the different choices for mom. This is really providing a service to new moms with twins. The Give-A-Way Educators Program is available nationwide to any educator who teaches groups of moms at least once a month. If you are interested please email us at info@mybrestfriend.com and put in the subject Twins Educator Give Away. Please let us know in an email about your classes, size, subjects covered, and number of moms attending monthly and how you heard about My Brest Friend.

We look forward to supporting new moms with multiples as comfortably as we have supported new moms with their single babies over the past 17 years.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew Zenoff, CEO/ Founder, Zenoff Products. Inc.

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Long-distance twins

by Jenny Peterson



It's my 30th birthday tomorrow, which means it's also my twin sister Joy's 30th birthday tomorrow.

I know...GET OUTTA TOWN!!!

Do you remember how people used to ask us all the time if we had the same birthday??

"Ya'll are twins?? For real?? You got the same birthday???"

Really, that was the number one question, followed by "do you have the same mom?" and "do you have the same dad?"

("Yes, we're just like regular sisters, only we were born at the same time.")

For the past three years, however, we're asked a new question: how can you and your twin live so far apart?

They mean New Orleans to South Carolina.

And I don't really have an answer. It sucks. It sucks about as much as it would if you lived away from your sibling and best friend at the same time.

And...your therapist.

And your personal comedian.

But when you plan your life in a particular place, you sacrifice things.

Joy and I talk on the phone every single day. Seriously, and on the proper phone.

We Facetime sometimes, but I don't want to see her face because it makes me miss her too much, and I don't want to see my face because Facetime makes it look like my forehead is running away from my body.

Joy and I talk like a couple in a long-distance relationship.

We scold each other when one of us doesn't call the other back in a timely manner, or scold the one responsible for us not talking daily. Ha.

"Ummm...excuse me, I did call you back, yes I did, I'm going to check my outgoing calls!"

I remember when we separated time zones for college, when I went to South Carolina and she went to Baton Rouge. (How the tables have turned...)

It was hard then, too, and I kept for a long time a hilarious note she wrote to me saying, "Our official call day is Sunday!"

Hahahahahahahahaha

Yea, Sunday and every other day of the week.

And this was years before we had cell phones.

Joy actually missed class one day talking me out of a freakout because she couldn't leave the landline/dorm room. Haha. Dorms.

When I studied abroad in Spain, I bought a cell phone and paid \$1 euro per minute...PER MINUTE...to call Joy in Baton Rouge.

Sure, it was cheaper using a calling card at a pay phone which I did, but drunk Jenny thought euros were really Monopoly money and I blew a lot of (pre-paid) cash on long-distance calls to Joy. Worth it.

When we got our first cell phones as sophomores in college, our mom signed us up for unlimited calling to each other's phone, and for good reason. We checked the settings on our phones one day to see how many hours we spent talking to each other and it was literally thousands.

Thousands of hours.

Joy and I don't text, though. That's one quirky thing, since in general I text more than I talk on my phone. But, for us, texting would just be a lesser version of talking.

We only text each other when we're at work and/or in a pinch - "What's your address I need it for 401k stuff" or "Your SSN ends in XXXX right???"

Continued on page 29



by Darlena Cunha

How To Care For Your Twins From Late Pregnancy To Early Infancy

Without Losing Your Mind

A friend of mine is having twin girls, due in August. She asked me for advice, and I had to reach far back into my foggy, sleepless memory banks to give her anything useful. I don't often talk about having twins, and I don't often talk about the infancy years, but both are so stressful, that maybe a quick tutorial would help some mothers out there. So, without further ado, here are a few ways to make your life easier, or at least survivable, during the early days.

1) Plan for the worst. Twin pregnancy (especially identical twins, like mine) are automatically in the high risk category, and this is for a reason. I'm not going to go into all the things that

could go wrong because usually they don't, and there's no need to scare you, but when your doctor schedules you extra tests, go to them. Make time in your schedule for the weekly ultrasounds. Should you have to go on bed-rest, take it easy. They aren't joking. If you have a specific birth plan, try to keep in mind that twins will complicate things, so get a doctor you trust to respect your decisions. That way you'll be able to trust that your plan will be followed as closely as possible without endangering you or your children.

Prepare for the worst. Know that there is a chance your babies will be born early. If you want to breastfeed, get your pump ready



beforehand, in case your children need to stay in the NICU for a time. This way, on the off-chance that things don't go as you planned, you have the knowledge and the tools to make your life as much to your liking as possible.

2) When you get home, be flexible.

Allow for the possibility that it may take a while for the babies to latch. It may take longer for them to gain weight. It may be years before they catch up to their peer infants. None of this is your fault. If you can keep yourself out of the equation and limit your guilt, you'll be more confident which will translate to better parenting. Having twins is hard. Give yourself a break.

3) Feed them when they are hungry.

Sometimes doctors tell you to feed them every two or three hours. However, because twins tend to be a bit smaller, possibly premature, they'll only be able to fit the smallest amount of milk in their tummies at one time. When their bodies use that up, they'll be hungry again. You might feel like you are spending all day feeding them, one after the other (unless you are more talented than I am and you can feed them both at the same time), but this phase only lasts a week or so—a month at most. If your children are crying because they are hungry, you should feed them. Even if it hasn't been two hours. (Actually, I believe this for any baby, not just twins and preemies.)

4) Do everything on the same schedule.

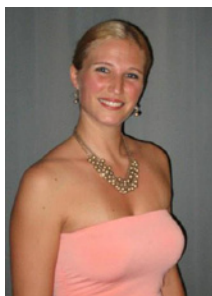
This is the most important thing I did, and I still reap the benefits today. If one is hungry, try feeding them both. If one is tired, put them both down. If the one who isn't tired doesn't drift off to sleep, spend the quiet time in the room with her while her sister sleeps. I can't stress enough how crucial this is. It makes two babies more like one baby when you'll desperately be in need of a break. If you put one down for a nap and keep the other up, then put that baby down for a nap while the first sleeps, you'll have to be on all the time. You'll exhaust yourself. And if you practice this same schedule thing, three years later, your kids will inherently understand that they nap at the same time, they go to bed at the same time and they eat their meals

at the same time. No one feels like they're getting special treatment.

5) If you are unsure of something, call. Put your mind at ease. Don't do it all by yourself. They have on-call doctors and home care for a reason. Your kid isn't gaining weight? Call. They're throwing up too much in your opinion? Call. They haven't pooped in a week? Call. They have a yellowish tint to their skin? Call. For all of these concerns, the answer will most likely be, "everything is fine," but why take my word for it when a medical professional can help ease your mind? That's what the numbers are there for. You won't be burdening anyone.

6) Accept help when it's offered and ask for it when it's not. You only have two arms. Even though you are caring for your infants 24/7, you are still going to need to eat and sleep, regardless of their needs. You'd be amazed how many people are willing to pitch in and help, especially during the first few weeks. If someone asks if there's something they can do, do not say "nothing". Say, "Sure! Can you pick me up some fried chicken? Or, you know that killer mac and cheese you make, boy, I'd love some. Or, could you just hold the babies for ten minutes while I take a shower?" They're not offering to be polite, like you think. They're offering because they want to help. Believe them. Use them. This is so important to your sanity.

Twins present a separate realm of issues and problems that seem never to let up, but are most definitely more pronounced in the first few weeks. How unfortunate that those first few weeks are the ones in which you need to physically recover from birth and learn how to be a twin parent. Good luck! You'll survive, I just know it. ♥



Darlena Cunha is a former television producer turned stay at home mom to twin four-year-old girls. When she's not parenting, she's writing novels, freelancing,

going to grad school or blogging at <http://parentwin.com>.

We ♥ Twins!



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Turning

Night Owls into Early Birds

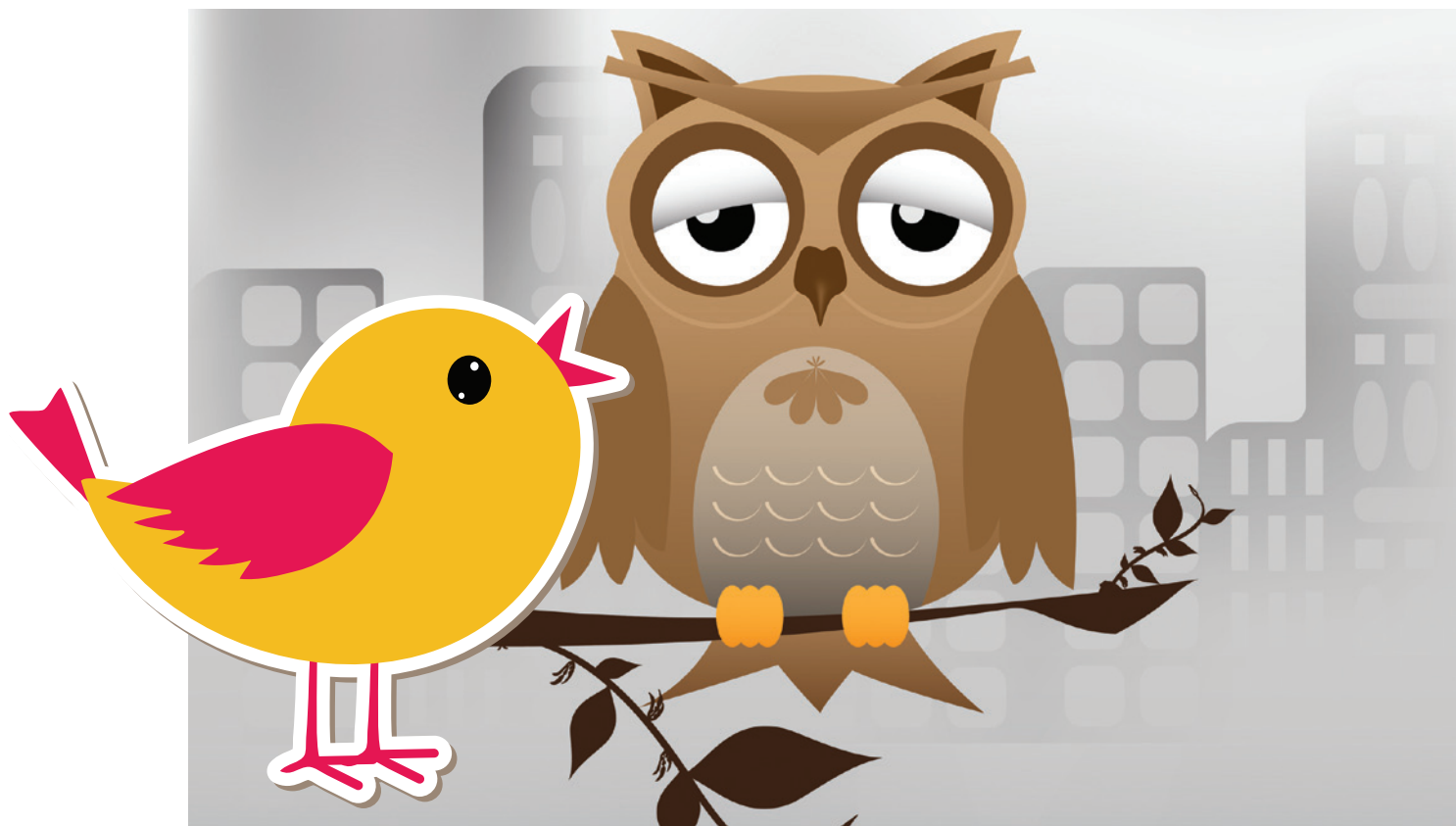
by Sabra Wineteer

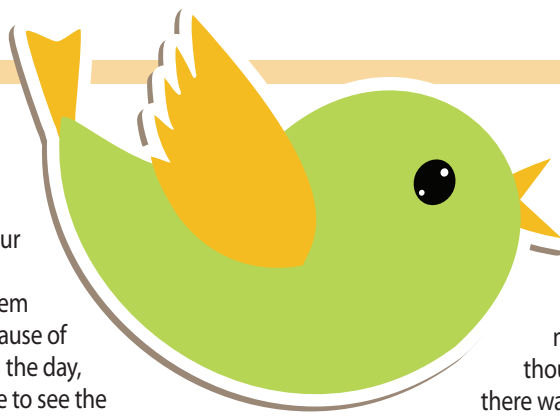
When my doctor came in to my post-partum hospital room and asked if I was ready to be discharged, my husband and I both audibly sighed. We were ready to take our two tiny, premature bundles home and leave behind all of the complications and helplessness that came from my twin pregnancy. I had developed preeclampsia which increased in severity until I was hospitalized for it at 34 weeks and when it worsened, labor was induced at 35 ½ weeks. I delivered my boy/girl twins on Groundhog's Day, losing half my blood volume in the process. Isaac and Samara were on IV antibiotics for Group B Strep and after three days in the NICU, they were perfectly healthy. However, we all stayed in the hospital an extra day so that I could recover a little bit more before my husband and I would be solely responsible for our children. We looked forward to settling in and leaving the chaos behind.

However, that first evening home we got a rude awakening, several in fact, from each twin. Though the pediatric nurses had ensured I would have the twins for every feeding, the twins

woke far more often at home to eat than I ever saw them while we were in the hospital. We quickly clued in that the nurses had kept them in the NICU for at least half of their nighttime feedings. At home, barely functioning the next morning because of our lack of sleep, my husband and I noticed that our twins napped more and ate less during the day. They were restless and wakeful at night and had great difficulty falling asleep. During the day, however, they fell asleep easily after a feeding and change. Their days and nights were switched.

My husband and I have always been early birds. I generally rose at 5:30 or 6:00 AM and went to sleep at 10 PM; my husband awoke at 4 AM to exercise or start his research day and retired at 11 PM. Given that under normal circumstances I was a solid eight to nine hour a night sleeper and at the time that our twins were born my husband was writing his doctoral dissertation, we soon realized something would have to give. Either we would have to change our sleep and work patterns, or our twins would.





We weighed the pros and cons of changing their sleep patterns. First, we worried that the adjustment might disrupt their natural inclinations. Then our pediatrician explained that having days and nights switched is a common problem for infants who spend time in NICU. Because of the hustle and bustle that occurs during the day, visiting relatives and family friends come to see the baby and new parents, pediatric nurses often wait until the late evening or nighttime to do routine tests on infants. Because of the potential for complications, NICU babies are more closely monitored. In my twins' case, a Group B Strep infection required frequent blood tests and antibiotic administration. These were most often done at night when things had calmed down in the maternity ward. Concluding that Isaac and Samara might have been set to this NICU schedule rather than their own, my husband and I scratched the con off our list. Then we realized that leaving them as they were would eventually be problematic. After all, school starts in the earlier hours of the morning. As an elementary school teacher, I had seen many a late-rising student suffer through half a school day before becoming alert well after 11 in the morning. Whereas there wasn't much I could do about the pre-eclampsia or Group B Strep infection, if I could prevent my twins from being night owls, I would.

Our first plan of action was to put them in our brightest room during the daytime. Our living room has a four-light ceiling fan and also opened up to our dining room, which had a six by eight foot window, so they'd get both artificial and natural light. We then made sure there was noise and lots of it. Being music lovers, my husband and I usually had the stereo on. So we cranked the volume to a level that, though not painful, was difficult to talk over. We also made sure the music we played was anything but soothing. My husband's musical tastes favor heavy metal and punk so Metallica, Bad Religion, and Pantera were in consistent rotation on our CD player. If the stereo wasn't on, the TV was while I sat on the couch folding those two or three daily loads of laundry that come from having newborn twins. So from the time they woke for their first morning feeding until it was dark they were in a bright and noisy environment. This was only mildly effective since they were still waking more during the night than during the day.

Undeterred, we became more aggressive in our efforts. My husband and I decreed that their crib, which they shared, was only for night sleep. No naps were to occur in such a quiet, restful environment. This meant, at their premature, newborn stage, that they slept in the living room in their bouncing chairs. We hoped that sitting up while sleeping in the daytime would condition them and cause some dendrites in their brain to

reroute and determine daytime was better for short catnaps and only nighttime provided the supremely comfortable sleep. This was slightly more successful.

As a last resort, we started waking them if their daytime sitting-up-bright-light-loud-music naps extended too long. Initially, we thought it might be cruel to wake them up and there was a strong sense of dread that doing so might induce dual squalls of crying. After all they shrieked when they were hungry, but also when their diapers were changed, when they were given a bath, or when their pacifiers fell out of their mouths. We then realized that in the NICU, the nurses were waking them up to stick needles in them to draw blood to test how well the antibiotics were fighting off their Group B Strep infection. Mom and Dad walking over and bending down to give them a little shoulder wiggle couldn't possibly be as traumatic. Still, with baited breath, we attempted a wake-up. Both startled awake, blinked, and looked around, but neither even whimpered. Very gradually, we then began to cut back the nap lengths. We quickly joined the when-they-nap-you-nap sort since the sleep deprivation left us needing at least one two hour nap a day. Eventually, however, they began waking up more during the day to eat and less at night and we continued our efforts, shortening their naps to an hour or hour and a half. Within a week of our bringing them home from the hospital they were self-waking on a fairly stable nap schedule and waking at night for feedings that were gradually reduced from once every 2 ½ hours to once every 3 ½ to 4. Because it often took between 30 and 45 minutes to feed, burp, change, and get them back to sleep, the extra hour or hour and a half of sleep became quite precious to us.

When a friend of mine, whose son was born only a few days before the twins, complained that he had his days and nights switched, I told her my twins had the same problem. I explained that my husband and I had intervened and she balked at this. She wanted to believe the conventional wisdom that a newborn's sleep schedule will normalize to day wakefulness, night sleepiness after several weeks without caretaker intervention. However, my friend's son was eight weeks old at the time of her complaints and the newborn showed no signs of adjusting to a new schedule on his own. Though she asked me how we had done it, she shook her head at my suggestions, saying that she couldn't, in good conscience, purposefully wake her son during one of his daytime naps. I didn't mind her refusing the advice, because at that point me and mine were all sleeping most of the night. Clearly, a more hands-on approach was effective in our case.

Samara began sleeping through the night at four months and Isaac at five and a half. They are now seven years old and we have found their sleeping habits are ideal for our family. They wake between 6:00 and 6:30 AM; in fact, if they don't rouse on their own, we know they are sick. We send them upstairs to get ready for bed sometime between 7:00 and 7:30 PM every night. After changing into pajamas and brushing their teeth, they read in bed until they are sleepy. Then they come to my husband and me for one last hug before we all go upstairs for hugs, nightly prayers, and tuck-ins. Then they are down for sleep, lots and lots of sleep. ♥

Tips for Switching Your Newborns' Days and Nights

- Expose them to natural and artificial light during the day
- Provide constant background noise in the form of TV or non-soothing music
- Go about your daily activities as normal
- Have different sleeping locations for day and night
- Gently wake them up to shorten day-time naps



Twins & TANTRUMS

by Marinell James

Taming Twin Tantrums

What's louder, wilder and harder to stop than one toddler throwing a tantrum?

Marinell James is a freelance writer and mother of two daughters, ages 11 and 5. Her writing has also appeared in *Pregnancy and Family Circle*.

Ask Christy Pierce, whose 23-month-old twins, Malena and Marley, throw double-team tantrums. "Malena will become excessively clingy, then Marley will fight for my attention," says Pierce. "If I'm holding them, they'll try to shove each other off my lap."

Whether the screamfest is synchronized or serial, tantruming twins are far more challenging than singletons. To cope with the double whammy of twin tantrums, it helps to understand the twin

dynamic and use strategies specifically tailored for two.

Target the Triggers

Twins have distinct temperaments, so parents must adjust their responses to tantrums accordingly, advises Carrie Kartman. When her twins, Caleb and Christopher (now 10), threw tantrums as toddlers, cuddling always soothed one. But for the other, hugging and holding was unwelcome interference. Parents may have to "split the difference," says Noelle Cochran, PsyD and co-founder of Symbio, which offers behavioral and psychological services for families with young children. "It's a total balancing act. Calm down one and he'll be less likely to set off the other."

Between the ages of 18 and 36 months, twins, like singletons, are trying to figure out how much power and control they have

and how to get more, says LeLe Diamond, MFT and Symbio co-founder. The stress of dealing with an ever-present "competitor" for parental attention, toys and other resources can be a tantrum trigger.

When Kartman's twins were toddlers, they struggled over toys: "Even if I got two of the same thing, they'd want the same one. It was totally about one having what his brother had." This is common among twins, says Cochran. "For a toddler to feel like they possess something, they actually have to be in contact with it. That's why it doesn't matter if you have two of the same thing. We see this with twins even when they're quite young. It's not about sharing, it's about possession."

To help her three-year-old identical twins, Ava and Olivia, be less "territorial," Terri DeCort writes their names on everything.



Sometimes, even this strategy fails – once her husband filled two “Ava” cups by mistake. The twins made sure he paid for his error.

Cups and what they contained were also a bone of contention for Kartman’s twins. “They always checked to see who had more. I had to use cups that weren’t transparent, so they couldn’t measure.”

When Pierce reads to Malena and Marley, the girls fight over who gets to hold the book and turn the pages, and a tantrum sometimes results.

To resolve control issues between twins, Cochran suggests teaching behaviors such as counting, using timers and taking turns. Such cooperation is a critical part of helping twins manage their twinship, she notes. If these strategies fail, you can do what Kartman did – put the disputed object in “time-out” for 24 hours.

Transitions are another time when twins may feel they lack control and therefore throw a tantrum. “Try making it more gradual, by saying, ‘Is there anything else you want to do before we leave in five minutes?’ rather than, ‘We’re leaving in five minutes,’” suggests Heather Ditillo, MSW, Manager of Program Development and Training for the One-KindWord Program, which provides support to families with young children.

Defuse the Bomb

Despite your best efforts, at times it’s impossible to prevent tantrums. Here are some do’s and don’ts for effective damage control:

Do:

Stay calm. “Children need to borrow our control when they’re out of control,” says Hedda Sharapan, director of early childhood initiatives for Family Communications Inc., producers of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.

Try distraction. Pierce finds that taking Malena and Marley outside or giving them a bath soothes them.

Give the child space. DeCort has Ava sit on her Dora the Explorer couch until she calms down.

Reconnect. As the tantrum subsides, “hug them and let them know you love them, no matter what,” says Ditillo. “We all make mistakes. They need to learn that you come back afterward and make things right.”

Talk it over. When everyone is calm, talk about the tantrum and how things could be different next time. “Do it with the twins together,” advises Cochran. “Twins experience themselves as a unit. The one who didn’t have a tantrum is still part of the reconnection, and needs to see that mom isn’t mad at their sibling.”

Get support. Join a group specifically for mothers of twins. “If you’re around families with singletons, you feel like you’re underperforming,” says Kartman. “Any mom can pick up one screaming kid and get out of the park, but what do you do with two?”

Don’t:

Ask questions during a tantrum. “You’re asking them to think when they can’t,” says Cochran. “It will only make them fall apart more.”

Lecture. “Kids are not teachable when they’re having a tantrum or heading toward it,” says Diamond. Save the speeches for when they simmer down.

Ask for the impossible. Avoid saying things like, ‘I need you to calm down, can you do that for me?’ It puts too much pressure on the child to pull herself together for the parent’s sake, Diamond says.

Lose perspective. “We tend to get angry at children for being angry or having tantrums,” says Sharapan. “But their anger is a reaction to feeling powerless, frustrated, helpless or scared.” ♥

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Oh, Boy!

A BABYSITTER!

Patricia Edmister, Ph.D. of Sherman Oaks, California was the director of developmental psychology and children's study at the California Family Study Center and the mother of fraternal twins.



by Patricia Edmister, Ph.D.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all find Mary Poppins to care for our children? No worries about discipline, who is the one in charge, the children's safety, cleanliness and health? Unfortunately, caregivers like Mary are few and far between. But leaving young youngsters in the care of others, whether it is full-time or just an occasional evening out doesn't have to be a nightmare, either.

Regardless of the amount of time the sitter will be watching your children, you can be more relaxed when you're out and about if you are sure of the sitter's qualifications, clear about your expectations in terms of house rules and how consequences should be applied, and thorough in your preparation of safety information (emergency numbers, cell phone num-

bers, a nearby neighbor that can help) and health products (first-aid kit, etc.)

In addition, you need to be sensitive to both the sitter's and your children's needs. For the sitter's benefit, you need to be clear on what the job entails. What will be the hours? What is the rate of pay? Is transportation provided or expected as part of the job? What are the children's schedules? How closely should the sitter enforce them? What should the sitter do if the children don't behave?

One of the best ways to train both the sitter and the children—and to evaluate whether or not a certain person is the one you want to have caring for your multiples—is to hold a trial run, giving the sitter a few hours or half a day with your children while you are in the house. You

can show her the ropes, see how the children respond to her, model your discipline style for her (noting any modifications you make for each child), and have a chance to troubleshoot any problems that seem likely to arise.

For the trial run, make it clear to the sitter as well as the children that you expect the sitter to ask you questions regarding how to handle situations, that you expect him or her to tell you if there are problems with misbehavior, and that you expect the children to obey the sitter or to expect the normal consequences for ignoring instructions.

Again, it is critical that all concerned know what the house rules are, for although the sitter is in charge, your expectation is that he or she will manage things

the way you want them managed. This does not mean that you cannot give them all some leeway in rules and scheduling. Many parents have established that having a sitter over for the evening is a special treat for the children—a time when they can stay up a little later, or have an extra story, or watch a special DVD, thus creating a positive reaction to those rights, as opposed to a feeling of abandonment, when parents take time for themselves. Parents should go over these expectations; however, with the sitter in the children's presence, so all parties understand them.

WHEN YOUR MOM'S THE SITTER

Sometimes a family member, often a grandparent, may be the sitter. This can present its own special benefits, but also its own special problems. The expectation, of course, is that this is a person who really cares about the children, and that is wonderful! However, sometimes Grandma has her own opinions of what to do and how to do it, and her parenting style might not agree with yours. This situation requires the same type of discussion regarding child-rearing guidelines and house rules as required with any sitter, even if she is your own mother.

One mom who was concerned about offending her mother with rules that differed from those enforced when she was a child, made up a chart of the house rules, which she posted on the refrigerator and went over with her mother and the children, just as she did with any other babysitter. This showed her mother that the children knew the rules and were accustomed to doing things a certain way.

It also gave her a chance to explain to her mother what the rationale was behind the rules, which was helpful, for some of them were

When They Don't Mind the Sitter...

With multiples, as with all other siblings, you may find that one child may be better-behaved than another with a particular sitter. This can be due to many reasons. The child may have a pattern of provocative behavior with authority figures, perhaps even you; so you may need to give that information, along with information about how you handle such behavior, to the sitter in preparation for the event. Another occurrence may be due to personality differences. We often find that some children respond better to one individual than do others.

In this case, it is important to listen to the children's feelings as well as the sitter's explanation. Discuss what occurred, how it was handled, and what should happen next time, if there is one. Occasionally, you may find that a sitter plays favorites between or among the children, and that can provoke misbehavior on the part of one or more. The key here is to try to get accurate information so that it doesn't happen again.

If you hear from the children or a neighbor, or your own suspicions suggest that something is not right, investigate, or go with your intuition and find a different sitter. Your children's health, safety and happiness are too important to risk taking chances.

quite different from the rules in place when she had been growing up.

Do keep in mind, however, that some grandparents have very definite ideas about how things should be done. If their ways are significantly different from yours and not likely to change, you need to be realistic, deciding for yourself how comfortable you are with their ignoring the rules for an entire evening, or, for that matter, being too strict. If you are not comfortable with the possibility that they might just do their own thing, you may want to confine their visits to times when you are there, and use someone less connected to the family as your sitter. ♥

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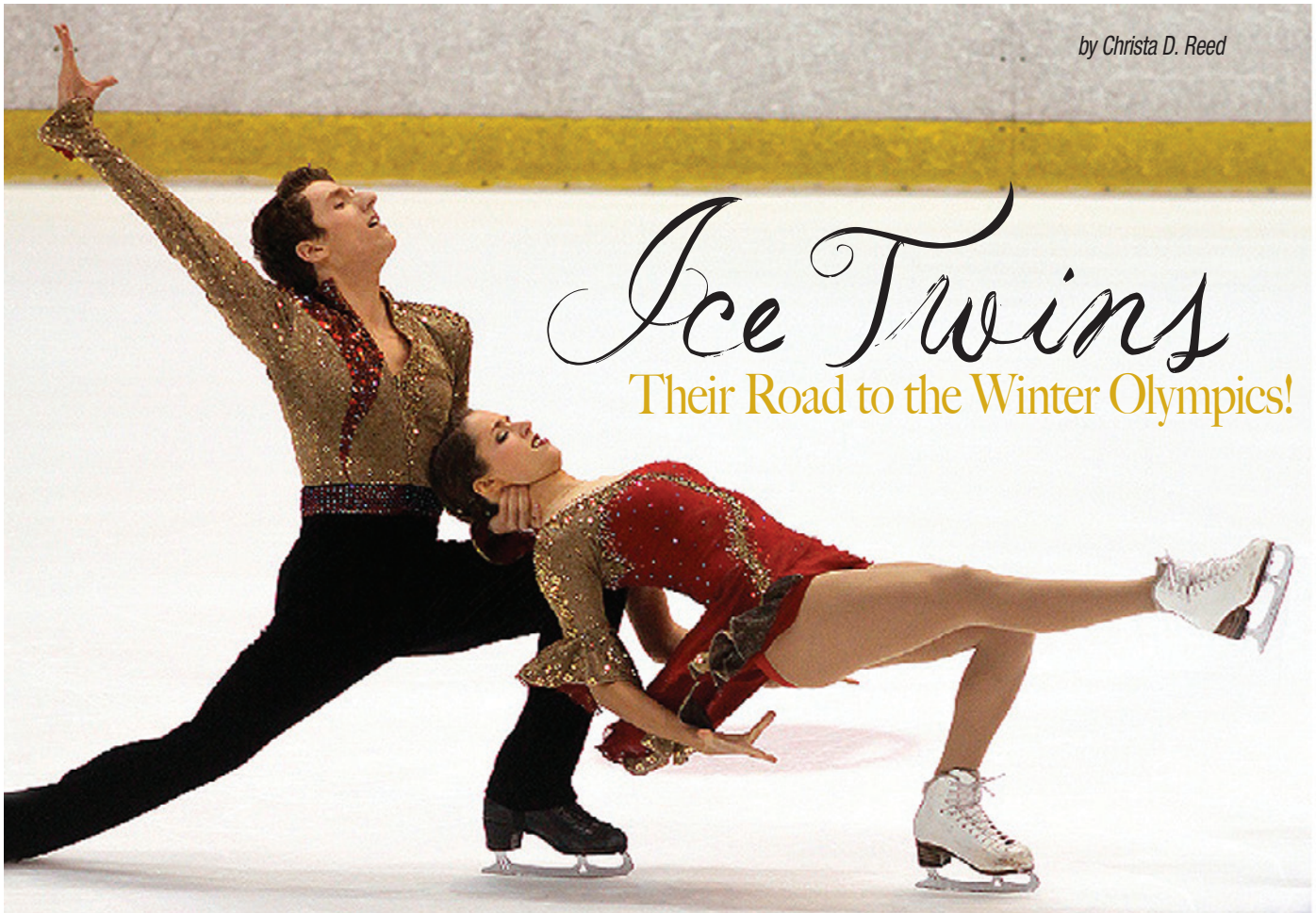
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by Christa D. Reed



Ice Twins

Their Road to the Winter Olympics!

Have you heard about the talented Ice Dancing duo Danielle and Alexander Gamelin? They are 20-year-old twins raised in Merrick, New Jersey who have a dream to represent the US as Ice Dancers at the Worlds and Olympics. In order for any Ice Dance duo to make it to Worlds and the Olympics in this competitive sport they must be passionate and committed to working hard and put in long hours of intensive training. These "Ice Twins" are ready for the challenge and we invite all of you to follow them and encourage them on their journey as they give their all to fulfilling their dream.

It all started when they were three years old and tuned in to see Pasha Grishuk and Evgeny Platov capture the Gold Medal in Ice Dance at the World Figure Skating Championships in Edmonton, Canada. Arm in arm they were gliding across the floor in their socks as Grishuk and Platov skated across the ice. "We want to be skater-dancers, we want to be skater-dancers," the twins sang out in unison. The imitation went on for days. In the summer of 2000, when



they were just 7-years-old, they first laced up a pair of figure skates and that is when their parents heard them proclaim again, "we want to be skater-dancers". After enrolling in the U.S. Figure Skating's Basic Skills Program and really enjoying it, the sounds of "We want to be skater-dancers" strengthened. By the fall of 2003, Danielle and Alex were being coached by international skating professional, Alexander Esman. A few private lessons a week became daily coaching followed soon after by comprehensive training with the twins' parents shuttling them between rinks, ballroom dance studios and ballet masters. The young twins now wanted to compete as an ice dance team.

Their coach called in a personal favor from a childhood friend, 2-time Olympic Ice Dance Gold Medalist, Evgeny Platov for just a few choreography sessions for the 2006-2007 season and then the twins were fortunate to receive frequent choreography and coaching sessions in the seasons that followed. The drive between Merrick and South Jersey, homework done in the car, and frequent extended stays in New Jersey motels, became part of the Gamelin routine. In December 2008, winning gold at the 2009 U.S. Junior Figure Skating Championships brought performance invitations, newspaper articles and recognition from the New York State Senate and Assembly.

Then when the 2009-2010 competition season came to a close, they were 16-years-old and knew that in order for them to continue their rise in the sport, they would have to live in a comprehensive training environment and develop an ice dance program to follow. So Danielle and Alex moved in with a host family so they could train at the



University of Delaware's High Performance Figure Skating Center under the coaching of Christie

Moxley-Hutson, Karen Ludington, and Alexandr Kirsanov. Six months later in June 2010, their father Lee followed establishing a home base for the family in Newark and mom Donna followed a year later.

In February 2012, preparing for their debut in Senior Ice Dance, they relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland to be coached at the Wheaton Ice Skating Academy by Alexei Kiliakov, Elena Novak, Dmytri Ilin and Ramil Sarkulov. The move meant another six months with one more wonderful host family before their parents were able to help them set up an apartment of their own. Currently, they represent "The Skating Club of New York" (SCNY) and they are associate members of the "Washington Figure Skating Club" (WFSC) training with the "Wheaton Ice Skating Academy" (WISA) in Wheaton and Rockville, Maryland just outside of Washington, DC.

Danielle recently told us via email, "We are so excited about the article in TWINS Magazine because our Mom used to subscribe when we were little ones. It was well before the Facebook days and she said she looked forward to reading the magazine cover to cover every other month." Danielle and Alexander would love everyone in the "twins" community to follow their journey and even sign their guest book because it is very encouraging to them to hear from other twins and twin-families. You can do this by visiting their website at www.IceTwins.com. You can also follow them on their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Danielle-Gamelin-and-Alexander-Gamelin/317264589004?ref=ts&fref=ts>

A Twin Thing....

Q: What's it like being twins?

Danielle: We are asked this question quite a bit. Being twins, we share life experiences more than siblings typically do and that creates a unique bond. It's special; it's wonderful and sometimes challenging in ways you might not expect. When we were little kids I was kind of shy and Alex was really outgoing. That made it easy for me to rely on him to make friends for both of us. Well, that was great but I wasn't stretching my social skills. As time went on I got over being shy, but the point is because of our twin relationship we tend to lean on each other's strengths. In some ways we are quite alike and have shared interests. Obviously, ice dance in particular is one of them. In other ways, we are actually polar opposites.

Alex: It's a hard question to answer because we don't know anything else and we don't have other siblings to see if our relationships with them would be different. We've been together from the beginning. Our mom says that when we were babies, Danielle developed motor skills, such as crawling, faster than I did. So to get me to crawl, she put Danielle just out of my reach, and I squirmed and struggled my way over to get to her. And yes, we had our "twin talk" that no one else understood.

Sometimes people ask if we read each other's mind or finish each other's sentences. Actually, that's an interesting question. There was a time when we were younger, about 9, I think, that Danielle fell and got hurt. I didn't see it happen and I was nowhere near her, but I suddenly got really upset - I knew she was hurt. Maybe that's reading each other's minds or a kind of telepathy. We often finish each other's sentences. Honestly, I'm not sure that's because we're twins, or because we spend so much time together. Here's a funny one - our parents refuse to play games like Pictionary with us if Danielle and I play as a team. They say it's pointless, because one of us draws a single line and that's all the other needs to "guess" correctly. They just look at each other and shake their heads.

Q: What is it like to skate with your twin?

Danielle: It's great to skate with Alex. I think we have an uncommon connection. We know each other and trust each other deeply. We've had lifts go bad at times and I can't tell you how amazing it is for me to experience how Alex protects me. I really trust him. Sometimes we can get on each other's nerves and really annoy each other, but overall it's awesome to skate with my brother. I think that the bond we have as brother and sister, and as twins, has helped us get through

tough times when maybe if we weren't siblings, let alone twins, we might not have done so. Our partnership is both on and off the ice, so when the going gets tough, and it does sometimes, we know we have to work things out and just can't quit each other and look for another partner. It makes us both more demanding and more tolerant of each other.

Alex: It's awesome to skate with Danielle because we love each other and have always wanted to skate together. Ice dancing as a team is a dream we're making come true. There are times when we get a bit testy, but over the years we've learned to get through that. Actually, it used to happen more often than it does now. Thinking back to earlier years, it was toughest for us when we hit about 11 or 12. Danielle started to get taller and heavier than me. It was so frustrating. Partnering was tricky and lifts were a feat. People were saying we should be split up, but our parents kept telling us that this awkward phase would pass.

Do you feel skating with your twin sibling can be an advantage or a disadvantage? Why?

Danielle: It's both. It's an advantage because we have a very good connection and we can be open with each other. The biggest advantage we have is that because we are related off the ice, we just can't quit each other, so whatever comes up we have to work through it together. We are naturally committed to our partnership. We see teams break up. We see the partner searches and we've never had to go through that. On the disadvantage side of things, because we live together and skate together, getting breathing room away from each other doesn't come as easily as it does for partners who aren't related and go in different directions at the end of the day. Sometimes I go to Starbucks or Panera just to get some "away from Alex time".

Alex: On the advantage side of things, I think because we're siblings, we are closer and more open with each other than we might be otherwise. It also doesn't hurt that we look physically matched and good together as a dance team. On the disadvantage side, sometimes people think it can be awkward for us skating together to more romantic pieces. As a sibling dance team I think that's something you have to overcome. When we're on the ice competing or performing we try to leave the fact that we are brother and sister off the ice unless it's part of the story line. The biggest disadvantage in being siblings is in handling skating expenses. You're not splitting the expenses with another family and that makes it really hard.

Source: www.icetwins.com

Travel Tips for Road Trips with Twins!

by Steven Jeffries



My wife Lisa and I have been planning and doing road trips with our twins since they were nine months old. That first trip to Niagara Falls was my bad idea, but it, at least, taught me a great deal about what you need to do, both to prepare for a road trip, and how to make it successful. Just as many things can be more complicated or challenging with twins or higher order multiples, a road trip is no different. These tips for both organizing and during a road trip should help make these summer family ventures more enjoyable.

There are several ways to save your family money when planning a road trip with twins. The Entertainment Book, which is available at www.entertainment.com and from some charitable organizations, offers discounts on restaurants, hotels, attractions, and even car rentals. Over the years we have saved hundreds of dollars using it on vacations, as well as locally. You can buy books for most North American cities for about 25 or 30 dollars each annually. American and Canadian Automobile Association memberships (AAA / CAA) also include savings at hotels, motels, and attractions. Tripadvisor.com won't save you money directly, but it will give you an idea of whether you are getting good value. Trip Advisor ranks hotels and restaurants based on user reviews. Reviewers rate the property on value and often comment on this. You can even read only the reviews written about family travel to narrow your focus.

Plan ahead! Start off by making a list of everything you will be bringing. My wife not only does this, she checks off each item as it is packed, and if it is an annual or regular trip such as our family takes to the cottage, then she revises the list on her computer. She also highlights items that still need to be purchased. When our twins were very young, obviously things like diapers were on this list. The toys or travel games you will bring will likely change. And even the need for a stroller or a portable play apparatus will not be needed as the kids grow older. It is also important to be aware of things such as your children's nap (if applicable) and bed times and try to plan travel around these as much as possible. Since you are driving, think of where you might stop to eat and/or for washroom breaks. A GPS, if you have one, may be able to help in this regard. Smart phones and tablets have apps that can find the nearest restaurant or gas station. My personal favourite travel app is "Timmy's Me" which locates the nearest Tim Horton's (a Canadian and northern US fast food and coffee chain) location and can even narrow the list down to the drive thru locations only. The AAA and CAA still offer map routes and flip chart style directions from any point in North America to another if you are a member. My wife and I always pack a small thermal bag and stuff it with such healthy snacks as granola bars, fruit bites or bars, and bottled water to quell the kids' hungry and thirsty moments, no matter where we are on the route.

Dollar store toys can be a great tool to occupy the kids, especially when unpacking at your destination. We take one or two trips to Niagara Falls each year, and we sometimes buy each child a small toy from the dollar store to give to them upon arrival. We also bought a cheap portable DVD player with two headphones, and although we don't use it in the car, it does come in handy when unpacking at the hotel or just for some quiet down time. We also ask the kids to choose a few small books to bring on the trip, and even bring these in with us to restaurants. They are perfect for while you are waiting to order, or for your food. And speaking of eating at restaurants, another tip is to ask for the bill when the food arrives so you can pay it promptly if need be.

Strollers should be approached on a trip by trip basis. It really depends on a few factors. An important factor is how much you might use the stroller and for what purposes. One thing that you might not have thought about is how dependent or not your kids are on a stroller. And in certain situations, cost may also be a factor. We had a large, heavy, and expensive Mountain Buggy Urban Double and two small, cheap umbrella strollers. We rarely used the last two items. When we went to the cottage, the large double stroller was a must. We would take long walks in the countryside with it. We packed it into the back of our vehicle, on top of all our other luggage, and baby equipment. But when we travelled to Disney World when our twins were about to turn four, they didn't want to be in a stroller anymore. After much debate, we took a chance and considered renting a double stroller at the parks at over \$30 a day. But after testing the kids out by walking in the Magic Kingdom on day one, we never did rent a stroller on that trip. We sold the double stroller shortly afterwards.

Have the kids help you pack their stuff as much as you can. When our twins were only two or three years old, we would get them to select a stuffed animal to bring along with a couple of other toys that would go in the suitcase. Our twins now help choose their clothes each day for school and so we let them choose some for when we are going away as well. They can also pick out such items as beach towels and pajamas. As I mentioned in an earlier tip, we also let them choose a DVD to bring, if we are bringing the portable player. The more they feel included in the packing, the fewer problems you will have when you are at your destination. This also gives them something to do rather than bother you while you are trying to pack up. You might also want to pack them a separate suitcase so you don't have to rummage through your own clothes, to get their stuff out. This strategy further allows you to pack your own clothes and necessities at your convenience. Happy twin travelling! ♥

Steven Jeffries is an elementary teacher and writer. He resides near Toronto, Ontario with his wife Lisa, the family photographer, and their six year old twins. You can read more on his blog at www.twiceblessedguidetotwins.com or in his new book *Twice Blessed: A Parent's Guide to Twins*.



8 Summer Must Haves to Keep Kids Safe

Summer is right around the corner and June is National Child Safety Awareness Month. Summer is full of fun, travel, going to the beach and more—here are eight summer must haves to keep kids safe this summer:

1



Parking Pal Magnet: SAFER unpacking; keep kids safe in parking lots

This is a super safety product; unpacking the car at the beach can be challenging — beach chairs, coolers, beach umbrella, towels, toys, kids, etc. The Parking Pal Magnet is a magnet to place on a safe part of the automobile and a child places their hand on the magnet to stay in place safely while the car is unloaded. Parking Pal makes trips to the beach and anywhere else this summer easier and safer.

\$8.99 • www.parkingpalmagnet.com

2



SwimZip Swimwear: SAFER swimwear

We are all aware of the dangers of exposure to the sun. SwimZip Swimwear offers super cute swimsuits in UV50+ protection. SwimZip blocks 99% of the UVA and UVB cancer causing rays from your little ones skin! We all might as well purchase SwimZip suits because it offers safety from the sun for kids so simply.

\$17.99 - \$29.99 • www.SwimZip.com

Eye Cream Shades — SAFER Eyes: UVA & UVB sun protection for those little eyes.

Eyes Cream Shades is a leader in providing quality sunwear for kids ages 6 months and above. All Eyes Cream frames are fashion forward, comfortable, as well as durable; and all lenses are polycarbonate and provide 100% UVA & UVB protection. As everyone knows, sunglasses are not “toys” or novelty items, but serve an important health function -protecting precious eyes. Many celebrity moms and dads sport their little ones in the Eyes Cream Shades brand.

\$22.50 • www.eyescreamshades.com

4



3



S'well Water Bottle —SAFER days with proper hydration: This is such a great water bottle for the beach!

S'well is a fashionable, reusable, sustainable water bottle company. Their bottles are double walled in stainless steel leaving liquids cold for 24 hours and hot for 12. Not only will you have a great water bottle for the beach, but you will help in S'well's effort to bring clean water to the world's poorest communities. Water is essential for life, but one billion people (one sixth of the world's population) do not have safe access to it. To address this crisis, S'well is a proud to partner with WaterAid.

The bottles shown above feature a quartz finish (no-slip) for that much-needed, sweaty-hand grip — perfect for the beach on a hot day.

\$35 • www.swellbottle.com



The Noblo Umbrella Buddy: SAFER beach umbrella use

Invented by two moms to stop fly away beach umbrellas (and the injuries that can result from this), the Noblo is a simple to use beach umbrella anchor. Three easy steps: 1) Fill noblo with sand, 2) velcro to beach umbrella, and 3) relax at the beach. Noblo will take care of your beach umbrella.

\$14.99 • www.thenoblo.com



Little Toader AppeTEETHERS - SAFER Teething Toy; keep babies entertained this summer

While adults and children have fun this summer, so can babies with AppeTEETHERS by Little Toader. Using a play on words with "appetizers" and "teethers", AppeTEETHERS are fun, safe and effective teething toys that look like real food. While BBQing this summer, baby can enjoy a Chompin' Chicken Wing or Baby-Q Ribs...coming soon are fruits, veggies and sweets. These patented silicone teething toys are free of BPA, Phthalate, PVC and lead providing the perfect amount of resistance to sooth babies' sore gums and best of all they are fun.

\$9.99 • www.littletoader.com



Zoe b organic Beach Toys — SAFER beach toys, SAFER for the kids — Safer for the planet

Made from corn, not petroleum.

- SAFER for our kids: no toxic chemicals like BPA, phthalates.
- SAFE for our oceans: If washed out to sea, our toys will fully break down in 2-3 years (not 500 years, like ordinary plastic).
- The world's first biodegradable beach toys.
- Made in USA.
- 5 pieces set: bucket, sifter/lid, shovel, 2 cups.
- Color: turquoise/lime, pink/orange

\$22.00 • www.zoeborganic.com



Dr. Robin All Natural Chemical-Free Sunscreen SPF 30+ — SAFER sun protection

With all the information about sunscreen/sun exposure a SAFER choice is Dr. Robins.

Made in California

Specially formulated by a Pediatric Dermatologist

Made in California and specially formulated by a Pediatric Dermatologist. Believing less is more, Dr. Robin created this broad spectrum mineral sunscreen without irritating chemicals, phthalates, parabens, or fragrance. Dr. Robin's special formula is: Gluten-free/ Water Resistant/ Formulated to minimize allergic reaction/ Coral Reef Safe. Dr. Robin is Robin Schaffran, M.D., a caring mom who happens to be a Beverly Hills Dermatologist.

\$24 • www.drrobin.md



With summer vacation just around the corner, you're probably wondering how to make sure your twins and family stays healthy during, and after, that long-planned getaway. Depending on where your travel plans take you, the risks may vary from the benign summer cold to more serious germs unique to exotic locales. Here's a 7 step guide to healthy summer travel:

1. Immunize your kids. If your travel is domestic, the important vaccines are those required for school. They protect against serious infections that can occur year round, like meningitis, whooping cough, hepatitis A (the kind your kids can get from food contamination in U.S. restaurants as well as those abroad), mumps, chickenpox, and stomach flu (due to rotaviruses). If you're traveling abroad, the recommended school vaccines protect against those same infections, as well as diseases we see less often in the U.S., but which are still prevalent in other parts of the world – e.g. polio, tetanus, and measles. Finally, travel to certain parts of the world requires immunizations that are not required in the U.S. You should check with your local or state health department before travel to determine what special vaccine precautions are recommended for your destination.

2. Wash their hands. Whether your kids are at home or on the road, hand washing is the single most effective strategy in reducing

the spread of infections. Kids typically spend less than 5 seconds washing and leave the sink with their hands dripping wet. A 20-30 second wash and thorough drying will reduce the germ load by as much as a 1000-fold. Simple soap and water work just fine, but sinks can be hard to find when you're on the road. Alcohol wipes and rubs kill germs very effectively and are "self-drying", making them ideal for your purse and the glove box in the car. Hand washing moments on trips include anytime there is contact with lots of people or with inanimate objects that lots of people handle – e.g. the security and customs lines at airports, the baggage claim carousel, tour buses and taxi cabs, public restrooms, etc.

3. Use bug spray and do "tick checks". Mosquitoes and ticks continue to be the most common U.S. vectors for diseases like encephalitis, Lyme disease, and tick fevers but simple preventive measures can reduce their impact. When possible, kids should wear long sleeves and long pants on camping trips and hikes in the woods. DEET-containing bug spray has been extensively studied and proven to be both effective and safe if used correctly. See the sidebar for safe use of DEET. When your kids come in to the tent or cabin or hotel for the night, do head-to-toe checks for ticks and carefully remove any that have attached.

4. Be smart around animals. From the dude ranch to the farm to petting zoos, animals can transmit lots of germs to kids. See the

sidebar for important safety tips when your trip takes you near furry friends.

5. Don't drink the water – or do, depending on where you are. Traveler's diarrhea is a somewhat nastier version of the home town stomach flu. It is rare for U.S. travelers to get diarrhea from the water in Western Europe and Canada, but common in Mexico, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Although antibiotics taken before departure are effective in reducing the occurrence of traveler's diarrhea, they are not recommended because of the side effects and the potential for overuse of these medicines. Effective prevention strategies include drinking only bottled water, avoiding ice or raw fruits and vegetables, and eating foods that have been cooked to high temperature while still hot.

6. Keep kids' hands off the floor of the airplane. The recycling of airplane air makes germs that normally are not readily spread through the air more transmissible. The top to bottom laminar flow of air in the cabin actually reduces the spread of germs from row to row, but forces airborne germs to the floor of the craft. If your kids don't crawl on the floor, they will have less exposure to the circulating germs; if they do crawl, use alcohol wipes to clean their hands before hands go to mouth.

7. Be cabin cautious. Cabins in the woods pose several unique risks. Bats, rodents, and ticks all like the shelter. Kids need to be warned to stay away from droppings of all sorts on the floor or on ceiling beams, and to never handle a dead animal. Perform "tick checks" more frequently when staying in a cabin. ♥

Harley A. Rotbart, MD, is a pediatric infectious disease specialist at The Children's Hospital of Denver, and Professor and Vice Chairman of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. He is author of the book, *Germ Proof Your Kids—The Complete Guide to Protecting (without Overprotecting) Your Family from Infections*, from which this article is excerpted. Find out more about Dr. Rotbart and his book at <http://www.germproofyourkids.com> and visit his *GERMblog™*, an up-to-the-minute source for important new developments in protecting your kids.

10 TIPS FOR KEEPING ANIMAL GERMS AWAY FROM YOUR KIDS:

1. Don't carry food, drinking water, pacifiers, sippy cups into animal areas; no thumb-sucking until hands can be thoroughly washed.
2. Don't let your kids touch the animals' food or water; kids should only feed animals with feed provided from a container with which the animals have not had contact.
3. Don't let your kids touch animal waste or soiled animal bedding.
4. Thoroughly wash your kids hands (and your own) after leaving animal areas; carry disposable alcohol hand sanitizer wipes if you can't be certain that hand washing facilities are provided.
5. The gates, pens, and all other areas near where animals are kept are contaminated with animal germs – treat these areas as if they are the animals themselves, and wash after contact.
6. Only eat or drink snacks in areas far removed from the animals, and only after thoroughly washing hands.
7. Don't let your kids put their hands in animals' mouths; feeding animals from an open hand must be carefully supervised to prevent bites.
8. Kids should have no contact with animal birthing or newly born animals that have not been thoroughly cleaned.
9. Don't let your kids drink unpasteurized milk or eat unpasteurized dairy products that may be served at the exhibit.
10. Bring bottled water in case you can't be sure of the quality of the water supply at the exhibit.

10 RULES FOR SAFE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF DEET BUG SPRAY:

1. The higher the concentration of DEET in the spray or lotion, the longer lasting the mosquito protection.
2. Products containing 10% DEET protect for about 2 hours; products with 24% DEET protect for 5 hours. The highest concentration of DEET approved for use in kids is 30%.
3. Use at the lowest concentration appropriate for the desired amount of protection.
4. Only apply on children once per day.
5. Don't use on infants younger than 2 months of age
6. Don't apply over cuts or wounds
7. Thoroughly wash the skin when coming indoors
8. Don't apply the products near kids' eyes and mouths or to kids' hands. Apply the spray or lotion to your own hands first, and then rub it onto your child's skin.
9. Don't use repellent to treat skin that is covered by clothing
10. Don't use combination products of DEET and sunscreen, but separate DEET and sunscreen products can (and should) be used simultaneously



Living with Triplets

from the words of
an older sister

I have triplet brothers. Yes, triplet brothers who are four years younger than me. If you are over the age of 35 you are probably thinking something along the lines of, "Wow! You must be a big help!" I know this because I get it all the time. If I had a nickel for every time someone asked me that I would have enough money to pay my brothers to not be my brothers any more.

by Amber Smith



I was four-years-old when my triplet brothers were born. Some people ask how we tell them apart. It's quite simple really. When they were born we burned them all with a hot iron, so they all have different little burn scars on their foreheads...just kidding! They are fraternal, so they don't look alike at all. It also helps that we LIVE WITH THEM. When you see someone every day of your life, you know how they look. When they were younger, I was even able to tell their coughs and sneezes apart. Every once in awhile when we tell people they are triplets, they will remark on how similar they look and we all share this look like, "Are they blind?" Usually I just don't mention them. I was friends with someone for three years before she found out I had triplet brothers. If I ever told stories about them I just said, "My brother. . ." so she didn't know their names or that there was more than one of them. When I tell people that I have triplet brothers they often say something along the lines of, "Wow, my brother is really annoying. I can't imagine having three." And they are right. You have no idea how hard it is to have three younger brothers until you actually have three younger brothers. You want to watch TV? Too bad, someone else already has the remote. You want to play Wii? Too bad, it's your brother's turn. You want some milk? Too bad, someone drank it all this morning and didn't write it on the list, and now you'll just have to have juice with your cereal. The story of my life...

Not that I resent them. It is really all my fault. If I hadn't been such a perfect child, my parents would have decided to not have any more kids and I would be an only (happy) child. My friends who are only kids say it is lonely, but let's look at it this way: You have your parents' most undivided attention. When you turn 16 your parents will probably buy you a car because they will only have to buy one, not four as in my case. My parents aren't buying me a car because if I get a car they would also have to buy cars for my brothers and that will be really expensive (If you are reading this and would like to donate to the "Buy Amber a Car Fund", it would be greatly appreciated!). If you're an only child, you can invite people over to your house. I have only ever had three friends sleep over at my house (one at a time). And no, it is not because I only have three friends. It is because when six people live in your house, there isn't a lot of extra room and your house probably isn't the cleanest place around.

When they were younger, they were like my real life dolls. I can remember pushing Carson around in a doll stroller while my parents took a much needed nap. Carson was probably my favorite because I got to hold him the most. Dylan has cerebral palsy, so at the age of four I was not often trusted with him. Evan was the smallest and often threw up which left Carson to be held, played with, and put in my doll stroller.

Of course, I didn't actually get to hold them often. That was usually done by an assortment of friends and family that stopped by to "help with the triplets." They couldn't even tell them apart. I was left in the dust. At four years old my level of cuteness couldn't

compare to newborn babies. My best weapons were being able to talk, feed and dress myself, but I was still left out.

In order to transport everything we would need when they were born my parents bought a 16 passenger van. A mini-van would not have fit all six of us, four car seats, a triple stroller, and the diaper bags we needed. It also comes in handy when we decide to take trips. The amount of fighting is greatly decreased when children are spread out over four rows of seats. Now they are bigger and much more annoying. Now instead of annoying me by crying, they annoy me by hogging the Wii. Instead of screaming and crying to wake me up, they just watch Saturday morning cartoons in the living room REALLY LOUDLY.

Family pictures are always quite the challenge. Getting all four kids to look at the camera at the same time without looking mad or blinking is not easy. We often do individual pictures and collage them together. One year we had to Photoshop Dylan into our Christmas card. Another year we had a collage of the four of us that said, "We couldn't get everyone to look at the camera at the same time...Happy holidays!"

Although they are triplets, they hate wearing matching outfits. My mom will pay them to wear coordinating outfits to family reunions or on school picture day. Some people at school don't even know they are triplets. They don't look similar and with the last name of Smith, it is entirely possible they aren't related, either.

As the older sister to triplet brothers, I often get stuck babysitting while my parents go out, run errands, or before they get home from work. I've also joined many school activities which is helpful when trying to get away from my brothers. They have also made me realize that I NEVER WANT CHILDREN... Ever. Never, ever, ever. End of story. My final decision. They are so annoying and when my parents get back from wherever they were, I retreat to my room and am very thankful that I don't have any kids of my own and vow to never have any.

They are often referred to as "The Triplets" or "The Boys" by our family. Sometimes my parents refer to me as "The Singleton." I don't appreciate it. For now they are really annoying. About every other blue moon, I share a nice brother-sister bonding moment with one of them. Currently they annoy me to no end. Maybe someday I'll appreciate them more, but for now I just can't wait to leave for college. ♥

Amber Smith is currently ending her sophomore year at Ankeny High School in Iowa. When she isn't forced to babysit her triplet brothers she is usually at a school activity such as speech, debate, show choir, track, key club, or color guard.



The Importance of
Finding Each
TWIN'S
INDIVIDUALITY

by Shannon Jones

Twin-viduality is the term I use to define individuality with twins. I have identical twin girls and as they are becoming older, the expectation for them to be individuals is becoming stronger. Most often they are referred to as “the twins”—making them one in the same. But they are not the same; they are two separate people.

As twins, how do we identify them separately when so much about them is the same? The answer is easy—we embrace their twin-vidualities—meaning we celebrate the wonderful things about being a twin but we also recognize the traits that make each of them who they are. Being a twin isn’t who they are but part of what makes them who they are. The same that being born into a particular family contributes to who each of us are. Being a twin or part of a particular family adds to the things that make us-us but it doesn’t define us.

What defines a twin are the same things that define each of us. For twins, some of these things will be the same such as how old they are, what their hair or eye color is, or even how tall they are. But there are other traits that we would use to describe ourselves that could differ from twin to twin such as their favorite color or food, what type of music they like or whether they’re a morning or night person. Just as we might share some of these traits with members of our family or our friends, twins may share these traits as well.

Sharing physical or character traits with another person, even a twin, does not cause us to be the same person; instead it allows us to relate to other people. For twins, it gives them another person early in life to relate to and interact with the same way we would relate to a brother or sister. A twin can embrace the similarities they share with their twin without it holding them back from being their own person.

A twin gives you someone to learn and grow with through the same experiences in life, providing someone to talk to and understand what you are going through. It also teaches them early on that no matter how similar a person can be, it is okay to be different. Many people would think the opposite but the truth is that as twins grow—they start to develop their own personalities and like different things. It’s a natural process the same way singular children develop. Rather than growing up fearing that they are different from other children, twins

are able to learn earlier that it is okay to be different. This does not mean however, that they won’t continue to share some of the same interests.

The reality is that although twins are different, they are the same age growing up in the same household within the same community. Things that influence all of us are going to influence each of them. They may grow up to have the same morals and values, same religious or political preference. We don’t discourage this between siblings that have a few years age difference so why is there an expectation to push to separate twins in their behaviors or beliefs?

I believe that it’s the initial presence of twins that cause people to have this reaction. At first glance, it would appear from the outside that everything about a set of twins is the same. They look the same, talk the same, maybe even dress the same. We get caught up in the fascination of how significant the similarities are that we forget to look further and see the individual traits.

The problem is not that twins are not individuals but that we fail to recognize them as individuals. This does not mean that they have to be treated differently; it just means that they should be recognized as their own person. If they enjoy the same things they shouldn’t be discouraged from this but recognized separately for the way in which they embrace these things into their own lives.

It is not our job as society to make them different people but to encourage them separately in the things they’ve already chosen to define them. It is not our job to put a separation in their relationship but to envy how tightly knit a relationship between two people can be. It is our job to understand twin-viduality—the thing that makes two individual people with two individual personalities so different when they are so closely the same as another person. ♥

***Shannon Jones** is first and foremost mom to three children—her son Taylor; age 12 and identical twin girls Kaylie and Alyssa; age 10. She and her husband Greg raise these three beautiful children in Colorful Colorado, where she grew up as a Colorado native. Outside of being a mom, Shannon works as a business analyst for an insurance company. In her free time, she is passionate about spending time as a family and preserving her family’s memories through online story booking.*

Tales from Twins continued from page 9

(For those that are curious, we have the same social security number except for the last four digits. But that’s probably not that weird.)

Also NOT weird?? That our birthdays are on the same day.

AND THAT DAY IS TOMORROW!!!!!! AHHHHH!!

Joy told me on the phone this week that she’s feeling “uneasy” about being 30 years old, to which I responded, “Oh, so you think I’m old??”

This is the same script as anything else we say to each other that is self-loathing.

“It’s so annoying trying to find jeans. My body is so awkward.”

“Oh, so you think MY body is awkward???”

“I have crow’s feet around my eyes in that picture.”

“Oh, you think I have crow’s feet?”

Hahaha (ca-caw ca-caw)

But guess what???

We don’t have to be long-distance twins for our birthday this year because JOY IS FLYING TO NEW ORLEANS TODAY!!!! I haven’t seen her since January!

I hope she brought some new clothes with her. Ha. (Yes, twins share clothes, duh.)

In college, we didn’t always spend our birthdays side by side, but that’s because there are spring exams and your birthday doesn’t always land on a weekend.

But for the better part of the last decade when we lived together in South Carolina and since I’ve moved back home, there was never any question that we would spend our birthday together.

Delta Airlines loves us.

And I’m dying with excitement to pick her up from the airport tonight. Best. present. ever!!!!

Best of all, we won’t be talking to each other on the phone at all this weekend!

No more missed calls, no more speaker phone while one of us brushes our teeth – “I AM listening! IM brushingmyteefyoureonspeakerffffone”

NO! This weekend, we’ll get to talk to each other face to face!!! The way it was supposed to be!!! The way God intended!!

I hope someone asks us if we have the same birthday.

Or the same social security number. ♥



<http://jennysays-hellofools.blogspot.com/2013/04/long-distance-twins.html>



Double Takes



1

Dad: Dustin Hoffman
Anna & Emma, ID
Age 4.5 months
Grapevine, Texas



3

Dad: John O'Brien
Max & Bergen, FR
Age 4
Spokane, Washington



7

Dad: AJ Starks
Sloane & Rowan, FR
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



4

Dad: Jason DeLancey
Gavin & Reese, FR
Age 2 in photo (now age 4)
Owings Mills, Maryland



8

Dad: John Sugden
Sean & John, FR
Age: 3
Portola Valley, California



2

Dad: Jeremy Bell
Madeleine & Vivienne, FR
Age: 5
Dos Vientos, CA



5

Dad: John Paul Marini
George & Anthony, ID
Age 3 1/2
Ansonia, Connecticut



9

Dad: Roy
Kayden & Kaylee, FR
Age 2
Alpine, California



6

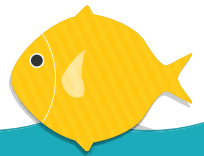
Dad: Jefri
Claira & Olivia, FR
Age 2
Round Lake, Illinois



10

Dad: William Kemp Sr.
Abigail Marie & William Winters, FR
Age 4-months
Kingsland, Georgia

May/June 2013



11

Dad: Gareth Hill
Nathan & Ryan, FR
Age 3 weeks in photo (age 2 now)
Wigan England



15

Dad: Gregory Dement
Elicia & Kaylin, ID
Age 4
Kent, Washington



19

Dad: Ryan Adrian
Landon & Brennan, FR
Age 4 months old
West Kelowna, British Columbia CANADA



12

Dad: Gary Burrige
Samantha & Matthew, FR
Age 5 1/2
Grand Island, NY



16

Dad: Ron Elseneimer
Carson & Kimberly, FR
Age 3-weeks old
Griffin, Georgia



20

Dad: Jason Rorie
Mason & Madeline, FR
Age: 2 1/2
Katy, Texas



13

Dad: Corey Lichtman
Kylee & Kacey, ID
Age 4
San Diego, California



17

Dad: Darren Rourke
Tom & Will, ID
Age: 3 1/2
State: Perth AUSTRALIA



14

Dad: John Leen
Aidan & Evan, FR
Age 1 1/2
Howell, Michigan



18

Dad: Arnaud Bidart
Nour & Leila, ID
Age 18-months
Bordeaux, France

Double Takes



21

Dad: Uli Schwer
Max & Ben, FR
Age 3 1/2
Miesbach, Bavaria, Germany



23

Dad: Rodney Rego
Emma & Joseph, FR
Age 20 months
Boston, MA



27

Dad: Tony Simek
Rachel & Paige, ID
Age 2
Lombard, Illinois



24

Dad: Anders Fritzen
Kylie & Ariana
Massapequa, New York



28

Dad: Jason Self
Grady & Ramsey, FR
Age 2
Chapin, SC



22

Dad: Brandon Kludt
Nathan & William, ID
Age: 8 months in photo
Canyon Lake, Texas



25

Dad: Jason Johnston
Keegan & Shae, FR
Age 2
West Grove, Pennsylvania



29

Dad: Brian Stanek
Corbin & Spencer, ID
Age: 5
Willoughby, OH



26

Dad: David Corsaro
Matthew & Daniel, FR
Age 3
West Caldwell, NJ



30

Dad: Rick Phipps
Ricki Lee & Addison Pearl, FR
Age 2
Jupiter, Florida



by Kay Bailey

Airports & Infant Twins

A Primer

My daughters were smaller and lighter than carry-ons when my husband and I took them through an airport for the first time. Despite their compact nature, they made the experience a real (ahem) adventure. Here are some things we learned about traveling through airports – and traveling through life – with twins.

Curbside check-in isn't as easy when you have twins among your baggage.

Babies have a lot of stuff that they can't carry themselves. This starts to cause trouble the second you get to the airport. Take getting out of the car, for example. First, both parents get out, leaving the hazard lights on. Parent 1 sprints to the back, hoists out the double stroller, and shakes it around with jerky motions that are reminiscent of trying to start a lawnmower. With only mild injuries, Parent 1 gets the stroller to snap easily into place.

Meanwhile, Parent 2 is getting Baby A and Baby B ready to sit in the stroller. That means unbuckling the carseats, removing Baby A, buckling her into one stroller seat, running toward Baby B. Oh, noticing that Baby A has started to list toward the street. Running back toward Baby A to put the stroller brake on, and then returning for Baby B. Extracting Baby B from her carseat and running her over to the stroller to get buckled in beside her sister.

The babies must be dressed in a perfect yet unknowable number of layers. This is so they will not get cold or hot. They will be snuggly but not too bulky to fit in the stroller straps. If they spit up or wet themselves, you can remove and discard the top or bottom layers as needed. All clothes in an airport are disposable.

While Parent 2 unloads the car, Parent 1 uninstalls the carseats and bases and wrestles them into protective covers. Parent 1 then runs laps to leave the luggage in a clump near the check-in desk, but not in such a way as to make it look like unaccompanied baggage that the bomb squad would have to blow up.

Parent 2 checks in with one credit card and shows the agent both photo IDs, then runs back to the babies in the stroller just as Parent 1 is running toward the agent to say, "I'm the one on the other driver's license." Parent 1 will have three bags hanging from her and will no longer look like her license picture which was taken when she was Young six months ago.

Once the suitcases with the formula, diapers, wipes, bottles, bottle brush, microwave sterilization bags, onesies, PJs, diaper cream, baby wash, swaddling blankets, disassembled bouncy seats, and two adult toothbrushes have been checked, the next big challenge is security.

Homeland Security does a good job of guarding against strollers.

If you are foolish enough to think that Parent 2 should be parking the car while Parent 1 gets the babies to the gate, you will be sending Parent 1 through Security alone. If professional terrorists

can't get through the metal detectors with disruptive items, you know it won't be easy for you. But it's possible.

Keep your ID and your boarding pass out and start removing your clothes. Take off your children's outerwear too. When I did this in 2009, TSA made us take off the babies' shoes. BA. BY. SHOES. When sleep-deprived parents ended up being scarier than any shoe bomber, however, TSA dropped this requirement.

Next, get your little bobble-heads out of the stroller so it can go through the X-ray machine. One easy way is to put the babies on the conveyor belt while you collapse the stroller, but this is really only advisable if the belt is going very, very slowly. It is safer and easier just to ask a couple different strangers to hold your babies. Choose nice ones so that if they end up kidnapping your children, at least your kids will be in good hands.

If that fails, you can dump your stuff onto the conveyor belt, scoop up your babies, and ask someone else to fold up the stroller for you. Practice your authoritative-yet-sympathetic voice and precise instructions beforehand. Make it immediately obvious which of the twelve levers the person must push inward while releasing Velcro Panel 8. Break the news gently that your industrial stroller will not go through the regular X-ray machine, so TSA personnel will either have to take it to a larger machine or run a magic wand all around it and test it for gunpowder. Remember to be extremely careful with your gunpowder before the trip.

When you emerge from Security, you will be stripped and barefoot. Your luggage will be unpacked and your stroller will be jammed into an incorrect forced fold. Your two mostly naked charges will be laid tenuously on an aluminum bench and in a moment will surprise you by rolling over for the first time. When everything is back in order you will see Parent 2 coming round the bend.

By this time you will despair, thinking that your journey is just beginning. But what you don't yet know is that the trip from the car to the concourse is a rite of passage. Once you have hauled your family all the way to Gate 12 and lived to tell the tale, you'll find there is nothing you can't do. Sit on a plane with wiggly babies for three hours? No problem. Change two diapers in an airplane lavatory? Child's play. Juggle career and multiples as you achieve a satisfactory work-life balance? Well, why not?

While you were making it all happen, everybody around you was noticing what a force of nature you had become. They can see, and maybe you will start to as well, that what lies ahead of you now is yours to conquer. So get on that plane and go soaring. Because anyway, once you have cleared Security, there's no going back. ♥

Kay Bailey is a lawyer, artist, and mother of four-year-old twins, Amanda and Elisa. They live with their cat and lots of other stuff in Arlington, Virginia.

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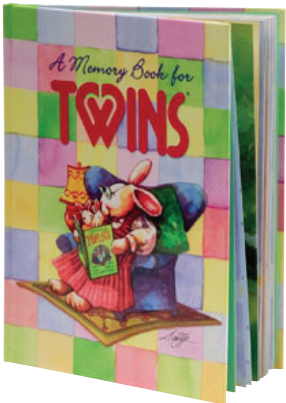


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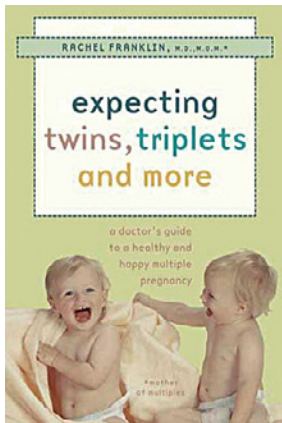
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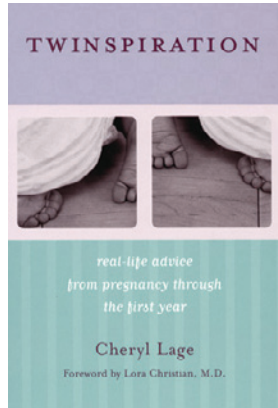


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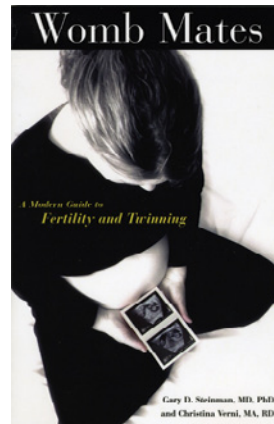
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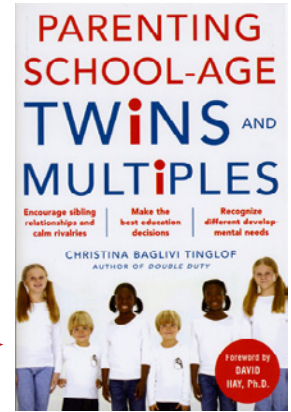
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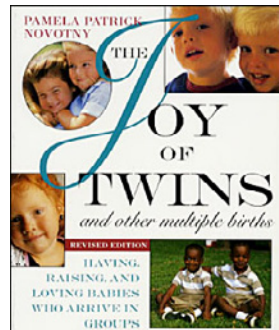
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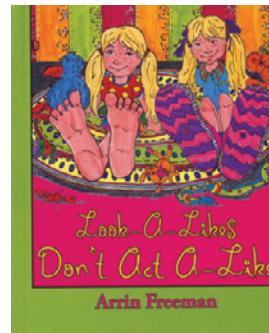
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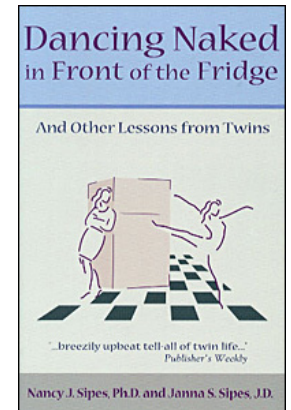
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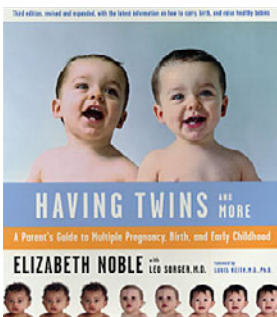
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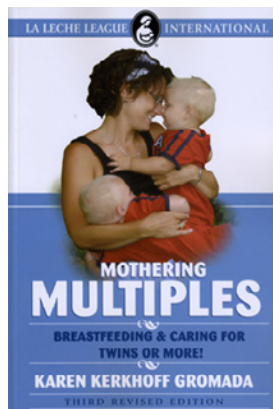
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